In the 4th century (with the specific terminology solidifying in the 6th–early 7th centuries), particularly through Church Fathers' comparisons and then Pope Gregory the Great's frequent use of *simoniaca haeresis* ("simoniac/simoniacal heresy").

Simon Magus's attempt to buy the power of conferring the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:9–24) is the biblical origin of the concept. Early Christian heresy catalogs (from the 2nd–3rd centuries onward, such as Pseudo-Tertullian) listed Simon as a foundational heretic, mainly for his magical/Gnostic claims and self-presentation, without yet making the purchase of spiritual power the defining label for the broader practice of trafficking in sacred things.

The explicit identification of buying or selling spiritual gifts, ordinations, or ecclesiastical offices *with* Simon's sin developed later:

- In the **4th century**, several Church Fathers (including Basil the Great, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, and Jerome) drew direct comparisons between the sale of supernatural favors or ministries for temporal gain and Simon Magus's offer of money in Acts 8. This marked the first clear conceptual linkage of the practice to "Simon's sin."
- Around 428, Augustine, in *De haeresibus*, specifically emphasized Simon's desire to buy the Holy Spirit as a central complaint against him.

The actual terminology followed:

- The adjective "simoniacal" (*simoniacus* / related forms) appears by the mid-6th century, attested in connection with Pope Pelagius I (556–561).
- **Pope Gregory I (the Great, 590–604)** popularized and made frequent the expression *simoniaca haeresis* ("simoniac heresy" or the heresy of simony). He used it in homilies (e.g., on the Gospels) and numerous letters in his *Registrum*, treating the buying/selling of spiritual things (especially ordinations and offices) as a heresy opposed to the Church, often ranking it among the earliest or most serious heresies. Sources describe this as the key moment when the term became established and common in Christian usage (with references around 591 in at least one homily).

The noun *simonia* ("simony") itself is later, first appearing in Latin in the Carolingian period (roughly 8th–9th centuries). In English, "simony" is attested from the early 13th century (e.g., around 1225 in the *Ancrene Riwle*), derived via Old French from Late Latin *simōnia*.

Early councils legislated against related abuses without yet using the full developed terminology. Examples include the Synod of Elvira (c. 305) on offerings at baptism and especially the Council of Chalcedon (451, canon 2), which penalized buying/selling promotions to the episcopate, priesthood, or diaconate. The practice became more widespread after the Church gained wealth and influence (post-Edict of Milan, 313), which is why the need for a specific name and stronger condemnations grew.

In short, while the biblical event is 1st-century, Simon's sin first became *known as* or

systematically *called* after him (as the paradigmatic “sin of simony” / simoniacal heresy) through 4th-century patristic comparisons, with the established nomenclature crystallizing under Gregory the Great in the late 6th/early 7th century.